



**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
ASSEMBLY INFORMATION MEMORANDUM**

No. AIM 70-2022

Meeting Date: April 26, 2022

Municipal Clerk's Office

Accepted

Date: **April 26, 2022**

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From: Chair LaFrance

Subject: Mandatory Community Council Boundary Review

The Planning Department's proposed timeline for the mandatory community council boundary review is attached for your review and information.

Prepared by: Darrel Hess, Municipal Ombudsman

Reviewed by: Barbara A. Jones, Municipal Clerk

Respectfully submitted: Suzanne LaFrance, Chair



Municipality of Anchorage
Planning Department
Memorandum



Date: April 15, 2022
To: Craig Lyon, Planning Director
Thru:  Kristine Bunnell, Long-Range Planning Manager
From:  Tom Davis, Senior Planner, Long-Range Planning Division
Subject: Timing, Department Responsibilities, and Public Process for a 10-Year Review of Community Council Boundaries

Timing

AMC Title 2, Section 2.40.040, establishes that reviews of Anchorage community council boundaries shall occur periodically to ensure that the boundaries adjust through decades of neighborhood growth and change and continue to reflect and represent actual neighborhoods.

Subsection 2.40.040B. establishes the timing for periodic reviews. It states that "...comprehensive review of district boundaries and the number of districts shall occur at least once every ten years, following the release of decennial U.S. Census results and after assembly redistricting is acted upon and any court appeals are disposed of."

The Municipal Ombudsman recently reminded the Planning Department that it has been nearly 9 years since the Planning Department last carried out its responsibility to facilitate a 10-year comprehensive review of community council boundaries. Project files indicate that Planning last facilitated a 10-year review of community council boundaries in 2014 (8-9 years ago). Community council boundaries underwent a comprehensive redistricting in 2003 (19 years ago). In addition, the 2020 U.S. Census results are becoming available this year at the Census Block Group level. Lastly, the Assembly has redistricted its Election Districts. Therefore, the triggers in the municipal code indicate that 2022-2023 is the required timeframe to carry a 10-year review.

In recent conversations, the Ombudsman, Community Councils Center, and Planning staff have indicated to me that they are not aware of any urgent, issue-specific request by any community council or assemblymember to initiate a review of community council boundaries, other than complying with timing set in code. The recent Assembly reapportionment does not trigger urgent community council redistricting, aside from the 10-year boundary review cycle. Community council boundaries define neighborhoods so have never had to follow election districts. Although there may be specific boundary issues to identify and resolve with the community councils, there does not appear to be a specific boundary issue driving immediate initiation.

Therefore, the impetus to initiate a 10-year review of community council boundaries in 2022 is solely to comply with the 10-year timing and procedure of Subsection 2.40.040B.

Public Review Process

AMC Title 2, Subsection 2.40.040B., establishes that:

For any review of one or more district boundaries, the Planning Department shall obtain public input and the participation of community councils on possible changes to community council district boundaries and shall submit to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Assembly a report and recommendations on district boundaries. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall review the report, and after conducting a public hearing, forward its recommendation to the assembly. Upon receipt of the recommendation, the assembly shall conduct a public hearing and by ordinance may adjust community council district boundaries. The assembly and the planning and zoning commission shall each solicit and consider the recommendations of community councils concerning changes in community council district boundaries.

The staff planner who facilitated the 2014 review process recalls that it took approximately 4 months to carry out the 10-year update. The 2014 review process was relatively easy, without controversy. It included one or two boundary adjustments, mutually agreed upon by the affected community councils.

Previous experience from 2003 indicates that the process can become longer and more time intensive if boundary issues are contentious. The process requires affected community councils to vote on the amendment and submit resolutions to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and the Assembly. A project to redistrict community council boundaries, if it involves consideration for adjustments to boundaries, would also require GIS support.

Recommended Work Program Schedule

The table below proposes initiating this project in fall 2022 but carrying out most of the work in 2023 as a minor, part-time project for a planner, with some level of GIS support. Following is a proposed schedule of the likely steps in conformance with AMC 2.40.040B. This schedule may be refined following a staff review of the previous 10-year update and discussion with community councils.

Project Steps for a 10-year review of community council boundaries:	Schedule
1. Collect/Solicit potential boundary issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the Federation and community councils of the process. Solicit requests for any boundaries to review. • Review U.S. Census results, Assembly reapportionment, and any neighborhood changes that may affect boundaries. 	Begin soliciting in fall 2022. Begin research in 4 th qtr. 2022
2. Submit a report and recommendations to PZC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a report with maps of any boundary issues. • Consult with affected community councils and allow time for them to review the report, vote, and submit formal resolutions to PZC. • PZC public hearing and deliberations. 	1 st qtr. 2023
3. Assembly public hearing, deliberations, and adoption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly solicits community councils' comments. • After Assembly hearing and action, forward adopted maps to the Municipal Clerk's Office and GDIC, and ensure they are posted. 	2 nd qtr. 2023